

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH COLONEL PAT DEVINE,
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, DEFENSE INTEGRATED MILITARY HUMAN RESOURCES
SYSTEM (DIMHRS), VIA TELECONFERENCE TIME: 2:02 P.M. EST DATE: FRIDAY,
DECEMBER 7, 2007

Copyright (c) 2007 by Federal News Service, Inc., Ste. 500 1000
Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA. Federal News
Service is a private firm not affiliated with the federal
government. No portion of this transcript may be copied, sold or
retransmitted without the written authority of Federal News
Service, Inc. Copyright is not claimed as to any part of the
original work prepared by a United States government officer or
employee as a part of that person's official duties. For
information on subscribing to the FNS Internet Service, please
visit <http://www.fednews.com> or call (202)347-1400

(Note: Please refer to www.dod.mil for more
information.)

CHARLES "JACK" HOLT (chief, New Media Operations, OASD
PA): And I believe, gentlemen, we are about ready. We've got on
the line with us Bryant Jordan with military.com and Sara Wood
with the American Forces Press Service, and me.

And Colonel Devine, I'd like to welcome you and thank you
for showing up and being here with us on the Bloggers Roundtable
this afternoon.

COL. DEVINE: Thank you for the invite.

MR. HOLT: Yes, sir.

Now, you're going to be talking to us about the Army
Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System. Now, that's
DIMHRS, am I correct? COL. DEVINE: That is correct.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir.

Do you have an opening statement for us?

COL. DEVINE: Sure. And what I'd start off with is that
I am the Army representative for DIMHRS, and DIMHRS is a DOD
system. And if it's all right with you, I'll just go into the
opening statement?

MR. HOLT: Yes, sir, that's fine.

COL. DEVINE: Okay, great. Basically I'd like to start off with the problem statement that DIMHRS is trying -- is going to fix. And basically, today we're an army at war and we have soldiers that are fighting the war, and we rely on multicomponent systems, meaning that -- or multicomponent units, meaning that we have units that are comprised of not only the active, but also the Guard and the Reserve. And for commanders out in the field to get accountability of their soldiers using today's systems, it's very difficult. At a minimum, they have to train up on six personnel systems and three pay systems if they're supporting a multicomponent unit.

DIMHRS, in a nutshell, basically takes all three components, puts their data on one single database, and then also integrates personnel and pay. So what DIMHRS does is by doing the personnel update, it automatically triggers the pay event for that associated soldier as it goes through.

Our implementation of DIMHRS will occur on the 1st of October of 2008. This will be a turnkey operation, meaning we're going to turn on all components, all functionality and all installations at the same time.

Once we do that, as far as the Army architecture goes, there's going to be 67 systems that go out of the Army inventory, and we'll basically keep a persistent interface with 34 of those systems. So it's a significant change inside of how the Army does business.

And significant to understand is that DIMHRS is a commercial off-the-shelf product. By "a commercial off-the-shelf product," we mean this is a product that is operational inside of the commercial community. So DIMHRS is basically using something called PeopleSoft. PeopleSoft is a product that's out there being used by Wal-Mart and Federal Express and Toyota, a couple of big, large industries.

So this is quite different for the Army as far as implementing a system, because this system is already operational. Our mandate is to implement the system without making major changes. So if we could use the system as native as possible, that is our goal.

And the way we went about doing this is that we took subject matter experts from throughout the Army, representatives from all three components, from DFAS, which is the pay system, and also took the programmers responsible for developing DIMHRS, sat them down in a room and started off with what is the legal end state required to create this process or to complete this process.

And then understanding the legal end state, we redesigned the business processes required to accomplish that end state. So we significantly modified procedures or the way things that are -- are being done, but we really -- slight -- very slight modifications to policies as we went through. So procedures change. Policies we really didn't modify.

Inside of a DIMHRS environment, we're going to rely heavily on something called self-service. So if the soldier can go ahead and do the update -- for instance, his address change -- nobody really needs to approve his address change; it's where he lives -- he basically puts that into the system, and it goes into the system.

Another example is today we rely on something called 4187, or a personnel action request. And inside of that form we basically do all our requests for personnel actions.

In a DIMHRS environment, this will be automated. So the soldier will come in, go down to a drop-down menu, select an item or a request, and then by selecting that request, the business eligibility rules required for that request will automatically kick in and go against his record, and then come back and say he's either a hundred percent eligible or ineligible for the following reasons.

Once that is determined that soldier can still submit the request, but if he's ineligible, everybody up that chain of command will see that he's ineligible and the reasons why he's ineligible.

Likewise, through self-service he can see the status of any action that's pending that he's submitted. So instead of going to his S-1 and waiting on-line for an answer or constantly calling the location, he can just go in through self-service, see the status and then basically go on from there.

DIMHRS is also different in that every soldier will be a user. So not only through self-service will every soldier be a user, but anyone who supervises a soldier also has a

responsibility to use DIMHRS. So DIMHRS will include, for instance, awards, leave forms and also evaluations, so all supervisors of a soldier to include a DA civilian who supervises the soldier will have to understand DIMHRS. So there's a big training impact as we go out.

And to work on training, we're doing something called the learning strategy. We're going out to installations. We've hit a number of them; about eight have already been accomplished, and we're going out and telling them DIMHRS is coming. We start off with a briefing to the senior leadership, the general officers and the sergeant majors, sit down and we do a desk-side briefing for them. Then we go and we normally have a theater-level -- a briefing inside of an auditorium or a theater, and we basically give them an update at the brigade and battalion commander and command sergeant major level that DIMHRS is coming, you need to prepare for training so on and so forth. And then we also do briefings to the S-1 personnel and the installation management command personnel to make sure that they know that DIMHRS is coming and how it will affect them.

It's key that the operational commanders are tuned into what we're doing, so this is -- although it's an HR system, everyone's going to be a user of the system. So we leveraged the G-3, the Army G-3, and he put out an operations order. It was -- I'm sorry. It was a warning order, not an operations order. It was a warning order saying that DIMHRS is coming. It went out on the 28th of November. But basically, it told those operational commanders that DIMHRS is coming, it's going to affect everybody, and there's going to be a training impact, with the understanding that there's going to be a full operations order that comes out later in around the January time frame that fully explains what they need to do for preparation to implement DIMHRS. We do have a DIMHRS website that's out there.

That DIMHRS website contains a lot of materials that soldiers can go to and download. It includes what's called a universal translator. So one of the impacts of implementing a commercial, off-the-shelf product is that we're going to change terminology. So on the screen, soldiers will see commercial terms as opposed to military terms.

So that universal translator basically has the crosswalk between the commercial terms and the future DIMHRS terms. It also has what we call workforce readiness packages. Workforce readiness packages is where we described each process, like a promotion, how you do it in our current systems, or what we call

legacy systems, today, and then how you will do it inside of a DIMHRS environment. And that workforce readiness packages not only explains the changes in terminology. It explains the changes in routing. It provides some DIMHRS screens. If any policies were changed, it describes them as well.

And then finally we end up with what we call frequently asked questions, where we brainstorm what a typical soldier would try to ask. That DIMHRS website is basically at the link www.armydimhrs.army.mil. Army DIMHRS is spelled A-R-M-Y-D-I-M-H-R-S and then dot-army, dot-mil.

And basically what we're looking for soldiers and commanders to understand is that our training plan for DIMHRS concentrates mainly on three courses of action that we're training. One course of action for commanders to implement is to leverage our distance education learning site, where individual HR specialists can go in and use that website and complete their role training and perform an assessment at the end, and then get their final evaluation and get access to the system.

We're also taking what we call train-the-trainers from the Army inventory, bringing them to basically three locations inside the Continental United States, giving them training on instructor-led training. They can go back and do instructor-led training for their soldiers and civilians and contractors as well. And then the final course of action is that we're including all the instructor-led materials on our website. Commanders can appoint a soldier, NCO, or DA civilian to download those materials and become the subject matter experts, and then execute that training as well.

So we need commanders and soldiers to be aware DIMHRS is coming. It's a good thing. It will put all three components in a standardized format, inside a standardized database, where everyone has visibility. And we're going to implement that in October of 2008. So I'd like to entertain any questions that you would have at this time, if that's okay.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much.

And Bryant, Bryant Jordan with us with military.com, why don't you go ahead?

Q Thank you very much.

One thing I'm curious about is that this came out of -- I guess the Defense Science Board, is it? And they found the high cost involved and other issues involved with having these various personnel systems. But you're representing the Army. I know the Air Force is going in. I've seen some material on that. Is this is going -- is this eventually going to be extended to Navy/Marine Corps?

COL. DEVINE: That's correct. The Army will implement on 1 October of 2008. The Air Force will implement on 1 February of 2008 --

Q/STAFF (?): '9.

COL. DEVINE: I'm sorry, 2009. The Navy has not come up with a final date yet, but they have appointed a program manager at the service level, and they're working towards implementing DIMHRS.

Q Okay.

MR. HOLT: And sir, you mentioned that it's got a universal translator in there for acronyms, and so that you would see the commercial term and it would automatically translate into the military term. Is that translator across the services? Because I know that Army, Navy and the Air Force also have acronyms that look the same but don't mean the same.

COL. DEVINE: Absolutely. No, on our website, the Army website, we only have the Army terms. And I don't want to mislead you when I say "universal translator." It's really an Excel spreadsheet that has two columns that has the legacy term and then the new term, or the DIMHRS term, so it's not a magical translator. It's just a listing of terms. But it's unique to the Army, based upon what we have on the Army website. MR. HOLT: Okay. So then the individual services would each have to develop their own to fit that as well, right?

COL. DEVINE: That's correct.

MR. HOLT: Okay, all right.

And Sara?

Q Oh, thank you.

Sir, maybe you could talk about -- I did a story on this about a year ago, and one of the mentions was that it was going to help with National Guard and Reservists. When they're activated, sometimes there's problems with a lag in pay. Could you talk about that, maybe?

COL. DEVINE: Sure. What I'd like to do is explain the process in which a National Guard or Reservist comes on active duty. And in the current environment, what happens is he receives what's called a mobilization order. Then he goes to his mobilization site or at his home station, basically, and he has to go through what's called a soldier readiness processing. And during that, he completes emergency data cards, he completes a whole bunch of personnel information.

The frustration that the National Guard has is that they go to their mobilization site, then they go to a power projection platform, then they go to a training installation, then they go to a deployment site, they deploy and then they go out to the fight.

But at all those five locations in today's environment, what happens is they put them through the same, exact process of redoing that emergency data card, asking specific questions.

And they certify them in each place. In a DIMHRS environment, everyone's looking at the same data at the same time, and there's one record per soldier throughout his entire career. They will actually bring up what he's done at the mobilization site, validate that and then move him on to training as opposed to recreating all those forms.

In today's environment, also, we have a separate active pay system, a separate Reserve pay system and a separate National Guard pay system. So in a DIMHRS environment, when that soldier comes on, all military pay is done inside of DIMHRS. So instead of trying to update separate systems, because in today's environment the soldier goes on active duty in the personnel world and switches to the personnel system, come out of the Reserve personnel system, but their pay stays inside the Reserve personnel system. So there's a disconnect of what happens and how long that soldier stays where he's at, and there's a very laborious way of trying to make sure all those systems are updated.

In a DIMHRS environment, it's one record per soldier for military personnel and pay, so all that information is shared, and it further expedites his entitlements and getting his compensation.

MR. HOLT: And so sir, what's the relationship between DIMHRS and DFAS, the Defense accounting service -- system?

COL. DEVINE: Right now -- when you say Defense Finance -
- you're talking about the system or the organization?

MR. HOLT: The system.

COL. DEVINE: Oh, the system. For military pay, DIMHRS will subsume or take over the responsibility for military pay that's currently executed by DFAS inside of their system, DJMS.

MR. HOLT: Okay. All right. So DFAS has still got the accounting authority, it's just the system that feeds that?

COL. DEVINE: Well, there hasn't been a final decision of who at the OSD level or DOD level will actually execute certain things in the future. So there's work groups that's being chartered at the deputy, undersecretary of Defense level, but right now DFAS -- (audio break) -- the functionality of pay moves into DIMHRS. Who actually executes that, I'm pretty sure it's going to remain DFAS, but we don't have the final decision yet on who will actually do that. MR. HOLT: Okay.

COL. DEVINE: And I have to caveat just so that you have a complete answer.

Retirees who currently retired from the Army will still be using DJMS and still be using myPay, but active soldiers and Reservists and National Guardsmen will move to DIMHRS.

MR. HOLT: Okay. That was kind of my next question was, how does that affect the retirees.

COL. DEVINE: Right. They would stay inside of DJMS for pay.

MR. HOLT: Okay. And Bryant, do you have another question?

Q Yeah, I was wondering, what is the expected cost savings over time to the DOD with this system? I'm assuming there must be one.

COL. DEVINE: There are a lot of estimates out there. However, I'm reluctant to even postulate a number, because we

don't know until it's implemented what exactly will occur. So a lot of people will come up and say, "Well, there should be a cost savings, you should be giving up personnel," so on and so forth, but until we actually test it and operate it, we really don't have a final number. I'm sure that DOD and EPMO has those type of numbers, but from the Army perspective, we have to see what's delivered on what we can save.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. And Sara?

Q No more questions, Jack. Thanks.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Well, sir, I've got another question for you. It's a little more -- I guess a little more technical. How will the DIMHRS integrate or work with the Army Authorization Documentation System, or Documents System, the TAADS system.

COL. DEVINE: Sure. TAADS is a persistent interface. TAADS will send the authorizations over to DIMHRS, and just like we do today, DIMHRS will post inside of our system and we will have the TAADS authorizations. We will still be going through what's called the PMAD (ph) process, that the distributors use inside of the Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate and the Office of Personnel Management Directorate, which is a subset of TAADS that they use based upon priorities of fill and that sort of stuff.

MR. HOLT: Okay. And then but TAADS will be -- it will be a persistent system. You said that. So it's going to --

COL. DEVINE: Right. It will be an interface and it will post inside of DIMHRS.

MR. HOLT: All right.

And then will the DIMHRS system have an effect on following for promotion? For example, I know, as a National Guard soldier myself, we've had some troops that deployed overseas and we had some issues in trying to get their promotion packets together because the recordkeeping systems were all separate, and getting those back and forth in a timely manner. Will this system also help us keep track of that?

COL. DEVINE: Absolutely. Inside of DIMHRS, there will be something called a Data Levels Permission List. But basically that permissions list allows the home station and the deployed station to be looking at the record at the same time. So if I'm

deployed and I update my records but I'm going to stand a promotion board that is executed at my home station, I can see my record as they will see it, and then they will have access to it. So it's not that we switch the records and put them in different or multiple systems. Everybody's using the same system at the same time. So there's great benefits for that.

MR. HOLT: Okay. All right. And Bryant?

Q Yes. In accessing this, does each soldier have his own ID and pin or code or whatever, and can the soldier access -- would be able to access from an off-base PC or only from a .mil account?

COL. DEVINE: That's a good question. On the 1st of August of 2008, Secretary Dominguez from P and R basically signed a policy letter for DIMHRS access. So the DIMHRS access policy right now is that all soldiers will use a CAC card with the exception of a very small population, and that population includes Reservists and members of the -- who are not inside the selective Reserve and who do not have access to multiple records. So that's the current policy today. So inside of this policy a soldier from a dot -- from a non-dot-mil address could still access DIMHRS from a non-government computer.

However, also on the 1st of August -- and I think I -- did I say 2008? I'm sorry. The memo that I referenced earlier was 1 August of 2007, not 2008. Also on that date, there was a second policy letter Secretary Dominguez signed that directed that the DOD program manager responsible for DIMHRS develop a technical solution to make sure that self-service for soldiers is an isolated capability, so that when a soldier goes into self-service, they couldn't go access multiple records.

So today inside of DIMHRS, if you have access to multiple records, you can bounce between self-service or access to multiple records. Inside of the future they want to just isolate to self-service.

Q I'm sorry. I just want to make sure -- I'm afraid I'm getting a little lost here. Self-service or multiple records? I understand self-service, when you're filling out your own forms or whatever else, but you're saying right now, when it starts up, that is, people will be able to get into the system and then bounce from record to record? I mean --

COL. DEVINE: No. What I'm talking about is an HR -- somebody who provides services to soldiers. If I was at a S-1 shop, I would be able to update multiple soldiers' records. I would have self-service capability, where I would go in to service my record. So right now as DIMHRS is designed, if I go into self-service myself -- and I do have access because I'm an S-1 clerk and I have access to multiple records -- I can bounce back between self-service and my record or servicing other soldiers because I have that access and permission. Q Right.

COL. DEVINE: Because of security, what they want to do is isolate that self-service completely so that you have to log in distinctly to self-service and self-service only, and then distinctly if I service other soldiers, I would have a different log-on.

Q Okay, I understand.

COL. DEVINE: And so in the future, once that capability is provided, where you can go into self-service and self-service only, then we will be locked down to a dot-mil-only address so that if you come in from a non-DOD computer, then regardless of how you access that non-DOD computer, meaning, either a CAC card or a long, strong password, you will be reverted to self-service and self-service only. You could not do access to multiple records from a non-dot-mil address.

Q Very good, yeah, very good.

MR. HOLT: Okay, now what does this mean to the HR career fields, for the soldiers in the S1 shops, in the personnel career field?

COL. DEVINE: What this means, you know, this is exciting for them, because this gives them time and resources to do critical thinking and to do the actions that they're supposed to be doing inside the HR world, as opposed to just nugging data into records. So leveraging the self-service capability -- that is a little bit of a workload that's diminished. We are going to make a significant change for HR people in that at the brigade level and above, there will be a capability called DIMHRS administrator. And a DIMHRS administrator is somebody who grants roles and permissions inside the organization.

So a brigade commander, in this DIMHRS, world basically controls who has access to the data for his soldiers. In today's environment, they have to do a request that's formalized, sent up

to human resources command in Alexandria, decided whether they'll grant access or not, and then sent back to them. In DIMHRS, basically it's that DIHMRS administrator who does that.

Also for the HR specialist, there's a new competency that's required. And that would be for workflow understanding or making sure they understand how to electronically route documents. Everything inside of DIMHRS is electronically routed and digitally signed. So we don't do paper anymore, but there is a responsibility to understand workflow, making sure that if I leave and I'm responsible for some HR activities, that I readress that workflow that's coming to me to somebody else if I'm out for a longer period of time.

MR. HOLT: Okay, and Bryant, anything else?

Q No, I'm all set, unless you're saying that once again there's a promise of the paperless office.

COL. DEVINE: I wouldn't say it's the paperless office. You can always print off a form or print off data and use that data. However the final official document is what's stored inside of DIMHRS, which gives you significance, as in you always have that record stored. Everybody's looking at that record at the same time, and we go on from there.

Q Very good, very good. I'm all set. Thank you.
MR. HOLT: All right, sir, and I've got one more question, and it's kind of a multiple-topic thing.

In the interface, the TRICARE TSPs, the DEERS systems -- will those -- how will the DIMHRS affect those? Will all that data be updated automatically as well?

COL. DEVINE: That's correct.

DMDC, who's responsible for those systems, they're also a receiver of data.

They're working with the DOD program manager as well. So DFAS, although their functionality is going away, they're making sure the right functionality is inside of DIMHRS. DMDC is making sure all the extracts that come to them have the proper information and then so on and so forth.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. And one final thought here: Is this -- will this system -- what are your thoughts on this

system as far as moving the -- our Reserve forces into a more operational Reserve? Will this be a benefit?

COL. DEVINE: Yes, it will be a benefit because you would have visibility of the soldiers. If soldiers were wanting to update their information, they could do that through their self-service capabilities. So there's greatness and sort of visibility and responsiveness in the system.

MR. HOLT: Excellent. Well, thank you so much for being with us today, sir. Have you gotten any final thoughts or anything you want to leave us with today?

COL. DEVINE: Yeah. If I could, I'd like to talk about, you know, the critical part of DIMHRS is one record per soldier throughout his entire career. So if I come into the Army and I enlist, after I complete my four years of active service and I decide to go to the Reserve component, my component switches inside of the current system. I don't transfer all my information to another system. After I complete all my mandatory service obligation after eight years and I get out of all my service obligations there, I can stay out for basically two years and then one day decide to come back into the Air Force. That same record would come across and be built upon, instead of separate records.

The other thing is the personnel action equalling a military pay transaction is also significant, in that if I'm a soldier deploying, the essence of putting me into a combat zone in the personnel system automatically triggers all the combat-related entitlements for me when I go there. I don't have to do separate transactions or be disconnected in any way.

The last two items I'd leave with you is that soldier self-service will be a significant thing, where we're changing, where the soldier's in control of his destiny, not waiting on line, waiting to be serviced and then having to come back because of misunderstandings, so on and so forth. We'll have real-time reporting, because everyone's looking at the same data at the same time. It's either a hundred percent correct or a hundred percent wrong, but at least everyone has the same common operating picture.

On 12 May, we're going to start training. That's going to be a significant event for the Army. We need people to be understanding that and preparing for that. Even though we talked about distance education, there is a responsibility to allocate time for distance education, and that's critical to understand.

One October is our implementation date, and we're very confident that we're going to hit that date.

And then finally, I'd just remind you that we do have that website up and running. We do have a lot of documents out there. It's kept current. Every two weeks, we do an update up to it. And the web address is www.armydhimrs.army.mil.

And then thank you for your time and patience, and we do appreciate this opportunity.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much for being with us and we appreciate it. And perhaps we'll be talking again here as things move on and the operation progresses. We look forward to it.

COL. DEVINE: Great. We do as well.

Thank you very much.

MR. HOLT: Thank you very much, sir.

END.